

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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CONTACT:Christan Baumer
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cbaumer@scz.org**How the Slawson Family Tiger Trek Began**

February 13, 2008 Sedgwick County Zoo announced that it reached its fundraising goals for a new Asian tiger exhibit. It also revealed the name of the previously anonymous lead donor: Don and Judy Slawson, their three sons and daughters-in-law.

“The Slawsons approached us with the idea of bringing tigers back to the Zoo,” says Mark C. Reed, Executive Director. “It’s been more than 10 years since tigers have been part of the Zoo family. The Slawson family has given the community a great gift in creating a home for these magnificent animals. Tigers have consistently been one of the Zoo’s most requested additions.”

The Slawsons donated the first \$1 million in November 2006 and challenged the Zoo Foundation to raise a second million. The challenge was met in December 2007 with the completion of the Zoo’s successful fundraising campaign. The Slawsons responded with the donation of another million dollars to cover the new exhibit’s projected \$3 million cost.

This state-of-the-art exhibit will be located next to the Asian Forest and north of The Downing Gorilla Forest’s Nganda Village. It will provide complete management resources for maintaining tigers. Site work began in February 2008 and the exhibit’s grand opening is May 22, 2009.

“Tigers have often been used as symbols of strength and power, but their survival is threatened as human populations continue to encroach upon their habitats,” says Don Slawson. “Our family views this new exhibit as one way to help protect and preserve the species while giving back to the community that has meant so much to us.”

About Slawson Companies

In Wichita, Slawson Companies is best known for its highly successful community-enhancing commercial developments, including NewMarket Square in northwest Wichita and Oak Creek and Cross Pointe on the east side.

Don Slawson graduated from the University of Kansas, where he earned a bachelor’s in political science and a minor in English. From this broad base, he has built a career as a geologist, real-estate developer and community supporter.

Don Slawson’s lifelong contributions to education include 10 years on the Board of Trustees at Wichita Collegiate School and two terms as member of the State Board of Regents. He served as chairman of the board his second year. He was also integral to the efforts to create a law school in Wichita, now the Garvey Institute of Law at Friends University.

About the Asian Tiger Exhibit

The largest of all cats, the tiger is one of the biggest and most fearsome predators in the world. Weighing up to 500 pounds and measuring more than nine feet from nose to the tip of the tail.



The exhibit is designed to be a total immersion exhibit, one that will transport visitors to the Asian countries where these big cats roam. And because of the natural design of the exhibit, visitors will be able to observe the tigers behaving as naturally as they would in the wild, prowling and playing. Designed with a river running through the exhibit, the tigers will access two pools, one deeper than the other. The pools allow the tigers to either completely submerge themselves or take a quick dip to cool off. Total square footage of the exhibit will be approximately 50,000 square feet with containment walls measuring more 16 feet encompassing two tiger yards for up to six adult tigers plus homes for endangered red pandas and Burmese brow-antlered deer. The exhibit will feature an observation tower giving guests a view of both tiger yards as well as viewing ports made of glass, so that visitors can safely get face-to-face with these magnificent animals.

The Sedgwick County Zoo is a not-for-profit organization, accredited by the Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA). Look for the AZA logo whenever you visit a zoo or aquarium as your assurance that you are supporting a facility dedicated to providing excellent care for animals, a great experience for you and a better future for all living things. With its more than 200 accredited members, AZA is a leader in global wildlife conservation and your link to helping animals in their native habitats. For more information, visit <http://www.aza.org/>. Sedgwick County Zoo is also a member of the World Association of Zoos and Aquariums <http://www.waza.org/>. Sedgwick County Zoo has been recognized with national and international awards for its support of field conservation programs and successful breeding of rare and endangered species. It's the No. 1 outdoor family tourist attraction in Kansas and is home to more than 2,500 animals of nearly 400 different species. For more information, visit www.scz.org.

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